



Representative Marcia L. Fudge

Topic: Opening Remarks – Farm Bill Conference

Date and Time: October 30, 2013 at 2:30pm

Speech Length: 435 words, approx. 3.1 minutes

Today we begin the long overdue Farm Bill conference. While it will not be easy to reconcile the differences between the Senate and House bills that is exactly what the American people are counting on us to do. Farmers and families across the country deserve certainty and stability. So let's work across party lines and produce a comprehensive Farm Bill which recognizes the undeniable link between feeding and farming.

As Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Subcommittee with jurisdiction over nutrition issues, I'm very concerned about language in the House bill that attempts to deny this long-standing, universally accepted link.

Not only does it cut the supplemental nutrition assistance program, SNAP, to the tune of *nearly \$40 billion dollars*, the House Bill also authorizes nutrition programs for only three years while reauthorizing all other programs for five years. Both represent unnecessary radical changes in our nation's agricultural policy.

The House bill eliminates categorical eligibility, and ends the ability of states to waive SNAP's harsh limit to three months of benefits, within a three-year period, for Americans without a job.

We all know SNAP benefits will automatically be reduced when the 2009 Recovery Act's temporary benefit boost ends November 1st, costing needy families as much as \$300 per year according to the Congressional Budget Office.

SNAP is the first line of defense for the most vulnerable among us and helps ensure millions of Americans have access to food.

The fact that the House even proposed and passed a bill with such unconscionable cuts to SNAP is beyond me.

We do not turn our backs on farmers seeking help with crop insurance, and we certainly should not turn our backs on hungry Americans. According to the Environmental Working Group, taxpayers subsidize 62 percent of the cost of farmers' insurance premiums. Some subsidies can be as much as 100 percent of the cost of the most basic coverage level.

Crop insurance is the only farm income support program not subject to some form of means testing. That is why I support the Senate language which reduces the level of premium subsidies for farmers with an Adjusted Gross Income over \$750,000.

Some of my other concerns include:

- the mandatory funding level for Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers;

- the inclusion of Central State University as an 1890 land grant institution; and
- the ability of schools to serve more fruits and vegetables under the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program.

Resolving these issues, and others, will not be an easy task, but it is the one entrusted to us. I look forward to working toward a collaborative solution.